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A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

# **AUTHORIZING PURCHASE OF SMALL PARCEL OF NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE PROPERTY IN RIVER- SIDE, CALIFORNIA**

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3567) to authorize the purchase of a small parcel of Natural Resources Conservation Service property in Riverside, California, by the Riverside Corona Resource Conservation District, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3567

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

## **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

Congress finds as follows:

(1) Since 1935, the United States has owned a parcel of land in Riverside, California, consisting of approximately 8.75 acres, more specifically described in section 2(a) (in this section referred to as the "property").

(2) The property is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture and has been variously used for research and plant materials purposes.

(3) Since 1998, the property has been administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture.

(4) Since 2002, the property has been co-managed under a cooperative agreement between the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Riverside Corona Resource Conservation District, which is a legal subdivision of the State of California under section 9003 of the California Public Resources Code.

(5) The Conservation District wishes to purchase the property and use it for conservation, environmental, and related educational purposes.

(6) As provided in section 2, the purchase of the property by the Conservation District would promote the conservation education and related activities of the Conservation District and result in savings to the Federal Government.

## **SEC. 2. LAND PURCHASE, NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE PROP- ERTY, RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALI- FORNIA.**

(a) **PURCHASE AUTHORIZED.**—The Secretary of Agriculture shall sell and quitclaim to the Riverside Corona Resource Conservation District (in this section referred to as the "Conservation District") all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to a parcel of real property, including improvements thereon, that is located at 4500 Glenwood Drive in Riverside, California, consists of approximately 8.75 acres, and is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture. As necessary or desirable to facilitate the purchase of the property under this section, the Secretary or the Conservation District may survey all or portions of the property.

(b) **CONSIDERATION.**—As consideration for the purchase of the property under this section, the Conservation District shall pay to the Secretary of Agriculture an amount equal to the appraised value of the property.

(c) **PROHIBITION ON RESERVATION OF INTEREST.**—The Secretary of Agriculture shall not

reserve any future interest in the property to be conveyed under this section, except such interest as may be acceptable to the Conservation District.

(d) **HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES.**—Notwithstanding section 120(h) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9620(h)) or the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.), in the case of the property purchased by the Conservation District under this section, the Secretary of Agriculture shall be only required to meet the disclosure requirements for hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants, but shall otherwise not be required to remediate or abate any such releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants, including petroleum and petroleum derivatives.

(e) **COOPERATIVE AUTHORITY.**—

(1) **LEASES, CONTRACTS, AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS AUTHORIZED.**—In conjunction with, or in addition to, the purchase of the property by the Conservation District under this section, the Secretary of Agriculture may enter into leases, contracts and cooperative agreements with the Conservation District.

(2) **SOLE SOURCE.**—Notwithstanding sections 3105, 3301, and 3303 to 3305 of title 41, United States Code, or any other provision of law, the Secretary may lease real property from the Conservation District on a non-competitive basis.

(3) **NON-EXCLUSIVE AUTHORITY.**—The authority provided by this subsection is in addition to any other authority of the Secretary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. CRAWFORD) and the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

## **GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas.

There was no objection.

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3567, to authorize the transfer of the title of land owned by the NRCS in Riverside, California, to the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District. The conservation district has invested \$2.8 million in the facility with the hope of eventually acquiring the property, and would like to invest in further improvements when the property title issue is resolved.

Conservation districts work closely with their Federal partner, the NRCS. This legislation is a simple fix to allow the Riverside-Corona district to utilize the facility and serve the local folks on the ground through voluntary, incentive-based conservation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3567.

H.R. 3567 will allow California's Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District to purchase at appraised value the parcel of property on which it is currently located, which is the former U.S. Salinity Laboratory.

The property is currently administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and is being co-managed under a cooperative agreement. The cooperative agreement dates back to 1996. Since that time, the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District has invested \$2.8 million into the property with the understanding that NRCS would eventually transfer ownership.

The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District provides natural resource conservation through education, collaboration, and technical assistance in southern California.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this measure.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the House to approve H.R. 3567, a necessary and long-overdue piece of legislation. This is a straightforward, commonsense bill that authorizes the purchase of a small parcel of Natural Resources Conservation Service property in Riverside, California, by the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District.

Since 1996, the conservation district has partnered with NRCS to acquire, collocate and manage what was previously the USDA Salinity Laboratory. Following acquisition of the property, NRCS has not obligated any Federal funds for plant materials research at the Riverside location in question.

On the other hand, the conservation district, as has been mentioned, has invested \$2.8 million in improvements and upgrade to the property. All along, the conservation district has an understanding with NRCS that they would eventually transfer the property to its ownership.

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Following a series of changes in personnel within NRCS, the conservation district was informed that legislation authorizing such a transfer would be necessary.

H.R. 3567 authorizes USDA to sell the NRCS property in Riverside to the conservation district for an amount equal to the appraised value of the property. The legislation further states that current NRCS operation at the property shall be allowed to continue at no cost to the Federal Government.

In closing, this legislation will provide long-term security for the conservation district and the investments it has, and will continue to make, in the property. It also protects the interests of the NRCS and the Federal Government for as long as its limited use of the property is needed.

H.R. 3567 is a win-win solution for all stakeholders, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for his remarks, I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio for her support, and I urge all Members to support the passage of H.R. 3567.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. CRAWFORD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3567.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SOUTH CAROLINA PEANUT PARITY ACT OF 2017

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2521) to amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to include South Carolina as a part of the Virginia/Carolina peanut producing region for purposes of appointment to the Peanut Standards Board.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2521

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “South Carolina Peanut Parity Act of 2017”.

#### SEC. 2. SOUTH CAROLINA INCLUSION IN VIRGINIA/CAROLINA PEANUT PRODUCING REGION.

Section 1308(c)(2)(B)(iii) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 7958(c)(2)(B)(iii)) is amended by striking “Virginia and North Carolina” and inserting “Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. CRAWFORD) and the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2521, the South Carolina Peanut Parity Act of 2017.

This legislation would allow for a representative of the South Carolina

peanut industry to be eligible for appointment to the Peanut Standards Board, which is tasked with the important role of establishing quality and handling standards for domestic and imported peanuts.

At the time the Peanut Standards Board was created, South Carolina was not a major peanut-producing State. However, now they are the fourth largest peanut-growing State and produce over 8 percent of U.S.-grown peanuts, and they deserve to have input into the establishment or alteration of industry standards. This bill would accomplish that by including South Carolina in the Virginia/Carolina peanut-producing region for the purpose of appointments to the Peanut Standards Board.

I want to thank Representative WILSON and the entire South Carolina delegation for their work on this legislation. This measure is broadly supported by the U.S. peanut industry and the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this common-sense legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 2521, the South Carolina Peanut Parity Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, the 2002 farm bill established the Peanut Standards Board to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on quality and handling standards for domestically produced and imported peanuts. The board consists of 18 members representing three regions: the Southeast, the Southwest, and the Virginia/North Carolina region.

Despite its status as the Nation's fourth largest peanut-producing State, South Carolina is not represented on the Peanut Standards Board.

H.R. 2521, or the South Carolina Peanut Parity Act of 2017, would correct this problem by adding South Carolina to the Virginia/North Carolina region and making peanut farmers and industry representatives from the State eligible for board appointments.

The legislation has the support of the entire South Carolina delegation as well as the support of South Carolina, Virginia, and North Carolina peanut growers.

In conclusion, H.R. 2521 gives South Carolinians a rightful opportunity to serve on the Peanut Standards Board.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman RICK CRAWFORD for his leadership today.

I am grateful to sponsor and support the South Carolina Peanut Parity Act of 2017, H.R. 2521. This bipartisan bill is cosponsored by all seven Members of

the South Carolina delegation. It gives the hard-working peanut farmers of South Carolina a voice and say on the United States Department of Agriculture Peanut Standards Board. South Carolina is fortunate to have Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers from Bowman for his leadership.

When the 2002 farm bill created the USDA Peanut Standards Board to advise on standards for the handling and quality of peanuts, South Carolina was not a substantial peanut grower. Since then, South Carolina peanut production has increased significantly, as it now produces 8 percent of the United States peanut crop, making the Palmetto State the fourth largest peanut-producing State.

As I have said before, South Carolina appreciates peanuts so much that the State legislature has selected the boiled peanut as the State's official snack. Each year, I look forward to the Pelion Peanut Party festival which celebrates the importance of peanuts which is held in Pelion, South Carolina, led by Mayor Barbara Carey.

The midlands of South Carolina is fortunate to have enterprising entrepreneurs promoting boiled peanuts with Four Oaks Farm of Lexington owned by the Mathias family and the appreciated Cromer's peanuts of Columbia, heralded as “guaranteed worst in town.” That is actually meant as a compliment.

My South Carolina colleagues and I are grateful to acknowledge the significant increase in the peanut crops in the State and to advocate for the increase to be reflected on the Peanut Standards Board. We look forward to encouraging peanut farmers in South Carolina creating jobs and having their valuable input reflected on the national level.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support today of H.R. 2521.

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN), a member of the State's delegation.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2521, the South Carolina Peanut Parity Act of 2017.

I am proud to join Representative JOE WILSON, who has been a real leader in the area, and the entire South Carolina delegation as a cosponsor of the South Carolina Peanut Parity Act of 2017, an important bill for South Carolina's peanut farmers. I also commend Harry Ott of the Farm Bureau who has been a great leader in this effort.

Mr. Speaker, South Carolina has experienced explosive growth in peanut farming in recent years, going from producing very few peanuts in the early 2000s to becoming the fourth largest peanut-producing State today, led by Brent Cogdill from Sumter. This legislation will finally give South Carolina peanut farmers their much-deserved representation on the Peanut Standards Board.